

**Project: Implement the Employee Performance Management
System (EPMS)
In the Secretary of State's Office**

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STATE DOCUMENTS

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Introduction

The Secretary of State's Office has never had any evaluation program for its employees. I am not sure that this office is ready for the implementation of the Employee Performance Management System appraisals, but I think they are long overdue for some of the following reasons:

1. There exists a lack of employee relations in the agency.
2. There exists a lack of mutual respect and cooperation between supervisors & other employees
3. There is insufficient time to devote to planning this program.
4. Budget cuts.
5. Most supervisors have little or no training.
6. Good employees have no career development plan.
7. There is little opportunity to identify high performance employees to advance.
8. There is little opportunity to identify poor performance employees to counsel and coach.
9. There is little opportunity to improve individual productivity, teamwork, or identify areas that need training.
10. Morale is low in the agency.
11. High performance employees are discouraged and unmotivated.
12. The poor performers are performing even worse than before.
13. The agency suffers with workflow problems.

14. Management does not want to manage.
15. Supervisors do not want to supervise.
16. Some employees who answer customer phone lines are in desperate need of training in order to man such phone lines.
17. Merit raises are given across the board, instead of given to deserving employees.

Furthermore, among management in the agency a lot of lip service was given to recognizing the need of implementing the EPMS, but I received little cooperation, little enthusiasm and expressions of a lot of doubt that this could be implemented successfully.

How to Remedy the Situation

Implement an appraisal program for employees. It just might remedy some of the employee performance problems, supervisory performance problems and management performance problems, and other problems that exist in the agency because of a lack of an appraisal program.

*“The biggest lie told by most corporations, and they tell it proudly, is that “people are our most important assets. This is a total fabrication. They treat people like raw material. If you’re serious about treating people as an asset, you’re looking at a dramatic increase in investment in them.”*¹

Project Development and Implementation

¹ Performance Management, (a pocket guide for employee development, by James Rollo, M.A.)

Having worked in companies and other state agencies that embraced employee appraisals, I knew that they were helpful. Appraisals help you to know where you stand and what one needs to do to be productive and how to exceed in the future.

In January of 2003 a change of administration took place in the Secretary of State's Office. A new Secretary of State was sworn in, Mark Hammond. while Secretary Hammond was organizing and familiarizing himself with the agency, he discovered that there was no performance appraisal in place, and he was quite surprised by this. At this time I was searching for a project to complete for my CPM course. I offered to research the possibility of implementing the State's model policy in our agency.

First, I had to find out if we had a policy in place. The administrator of our agency provided me with a letter from the Division of Budget and Analyses Office of Human Resources dated May 13, 1996 (**Appendix A**) This was a letter approving a revised Employee Performance Management System policy. My next step was to examine the policy in place to determine if this policy was ideal for the Secretary of State's Office. After meeting with the Administrator and Deputy Secretary of State, we made a few changes to customize a policy just for the agency. Secretary Hammond submitted these changes to Terry Baggott, the agency's human resource analysis. Mr. Hammond received a letter approving the revised policy on August 25, 2003. (**Appendix B**)

The next step was to collect employee position descriptions and update them. (**Appendix C**) There are twenty-five full time employees in the Secretary of State's Office. At least half of the position descriptions needed to be updated, and planning stages had to be typed up for all twenty-six employees. (**Appendix D**) This was very

time consuming. I literally had to type in each person's duties and decide what criteria must be met in order to do to carry out the job successfully.

Once I completed the planning stage, I corresponded with our human resource analyst to set up training sessions for management, supervisors and employees on October 7, 2003. (**Appendix E**) In a telephone conversation in December, he suggested that we meet in late summer to discuss the training process and to set up a universal date for evaluations, which means that we must revise our policy at that time.

Recommendations

I believe that by the implementation of the EPMS or any other form of employee appraisal can benefit the agency and its employees will benefit as well. An appraisal system helps develop the goals of the organization and the goals and career paths for the employees. It's a win win situation.

When no appraisal system is in place, there is no documentation to protect the agency against possible grievance. The evaluation system helps to promote equal opportunity requirements or other legal mandates. When no evaluation system is in place, it can tie your hands when it comes to getting rid of the undesirables in your organization. You have no paper trail. When no evaluation system is in place merit pay is divvied up without merit. This certainly is demoralizing to employees. It is a fair system and should be mandatory.

***"It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it."*²**

² The Grantsmanship Center, Employee Evaluation

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A CONTAINS CORRESPONDENCE APPROVING A REVISED VERION OF THE
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY DATED MAY 13, 1996.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
State Budget and Control Board
DIVISION OF BUDGET AND ANALYSES
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES



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CHAIRMAN, SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

HENRY E. BROWN, JR.
CHAIRMAN, WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

LUTHER F. CARTER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 13, 1996

Ms. Gloria Hallman
Office Manager
Office of the Secretary of State
P. O. Box 11350
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Ms. Hallman:

Your revised Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) policy has been approved and is enclosed for your files. Each page has been stamped and dated to indicate this approval. We suggest that each individual policy and your policy manual contain a disclaimer in large, bold type. If further information is needed regarding issues related to the disclaimer, please call your Employee Relations Analyst.

Please note that the new Budget and Control Board approved EPMS criteria, from which this policy was developed, is not effective until July 1, 1996. Several of the provisions of this policy may not be implemented prior to that date.

Should you determine that further revisions to your policies are necessary, please submit them to our office for review and approval. We urge you to share your updated policies with supervisors and managers and to train new employees in the processes. Your continued cooperation and support in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna G. Traywick".

Donna G. Traywick
Assistant Director
Office of Human Resources

DGT: esm

Enclosure

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

JIM MILES
SECRETARY OF STATE



P.O. BOX 11350
COLUMBIA, SC 29211

SECRETARY OF STATE'S
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY
(Effective 7/1/96)

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS POLICY DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY, THE SECRETARY OF STATE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENTS OF THIS POLICY, IN WHOLE OR IN PART.

GENERAL INFORMATION

All performance appraisals shall be made by the employee's supervisor (the rater) who has direct experience or knowledge of the work being performed. The appraisal shall be reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (the reviewer), unless the rater is the agency head, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee. The reviewer may attach additional comments to the appraisal, and in the attachment may take exception to any of the rater's appraisal points. In addition, the reviewer has the authority to change the appraisal completed by the rater. If the reviewer elects to change the rating, the change and associated justification should be noted on the appraisal document. Whenever an employee's job responsibilities change significantly, the appraisal document should be revised to reflect that change. The final appraisal must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer and the employee, if possible. If any party refuses to sign the appraisal, a notation shall be made on the performance appraisal of this. If possible, a witness should sign to acknowledge that the party refused to sign the appraisal.

All performance appraisals shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request, this agency shall furnish the employee with a copy of their performance appraisal with copies of all pertinent attachments including the form completed at the time of the planning stage and the final appraisal form.

TRAINING

Training is encouraged for all employees within the agency in regard to EPMS.

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LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE

There shall be four levels of performance to rate each job function and objective and to rate overall performance:

1. Substantially Exceeds Performance Requirements
Work that is characterized by exemplary accomplishments throughout the rating period; performance that is considerably and consistently above the criteria of the job function.
2. Exceeds Performance Requirements
Work that is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period.
3. Meets Performance Requirements
Work that meets the criteria of the job function.
4. Below Performance Requirements
Work that fails to meet the criteria of the job function.

Performance characteristics shall not be rated by the four levels of performance, but shall be given a rating of acceptable or unacceptable.

1. Acceptable
Meets requirements.
2. Unacceptable
Fails to meet requirements.

PLANNING STAGE

Each employee shall have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. The employee's job functions (which include job duties and success criteria), objectives, and performance characteristics for the next rating period will be discussed at this time. The rater and employee should participate in drafting the planning stage document. The reviewing officer and the rater should discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage. A rater may incorporate a team activity into the planning stage document. The team performance being evaluated could constitute a job function, an objective, or one criteria for a particular job function or objective. A rater may also link the employee's training plan to the planning stage document.

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JOB FUNCTIONS

The rater and the employee shall determine the job functions (which include job duties and success criteria) by reviewing the employee's position description. If the position description is not up-to-date, or if there is no position description, one should be prepared and submitted for approval. In those instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon the job functions, the rater's decision shall be final. The statement outlining the job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each job function shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives shall be optional for all employees. An objective should be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. The statement outlining the objective(s) should also include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the rater. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the rater for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

The Office of Human Resources will provide agencies with a list of suggested performance characteristics and their definitions. Each performance characteristic shall be defined in the planning stage and rated as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" in the evaluation stage. The performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning document. The performance characteristics section shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating.

It shall be mandatory for all managers and supervisors to be rated on the performance characteristic of "promoting equal opportunity." (Promoting equal opportunity includes such areas as hiring, promotion, or placement; level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity; progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force; and contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.)

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Donna G. Grayson 5/3/96

ONGOING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A rater should continue to provide performance feedback to employees throughout the review period. An unofficial mid-year review is encouraged to facilitate this communication between raters and employees. In addition, various options are available to the rater in conducting performance management.

A rater may gather feedback to prepare the appraisal document and/or conduct unofficial appraisals more frequently than required in this policy.

PROBATIONARY APPOINTMENTS

Each new employee (original appointment) shall be rated prior to the completion of a one year probationary period for noninstructional personnel and the academic year duration for instructional personnel. The official review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the official review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain permanent status as a State employee and permanent status in the class. The probationary period may not be extended. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee shall be terminated before becoming a permanent employee. Until an employee has completed a successful probationary period, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act of 1982; therefore, this agency is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

All permanent employees shall be given an annual appraisal no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employee's official review date. The official review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the official review date, the employee shall receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default. A permanent employee may not be issued an overall "below performance requirements" appraisal at any time during the annual review period without following the "Substandard Performance Process."

TRIAL PERIODS

Each permanent employee who has been demoted, promoted or reclassified shall be appraised prior to the completion of a six month trial period in the position. The official review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an

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employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the official review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain permanent status in the new classification. Once an employee has completed a successful trial period and obtained permanent status in a class, the employee retains permanent status in the class throughout the employee's continuous service. The six month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the end of the six month trial period.

The "Substandard Performance Process" is not required to demote or downwardly reclass a trial employee to a class having an equal or higher pay band than the class from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. A trial employee may not grieve such demotion. The trial employee may not be terminated or demoted to a lower graded class than that from which promoted for performance reasons without following the "Substandard Performance Process."

SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE PROCESS FOR PERMANENT EMPLOYEES

A permanent employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving a "below performance requirements" rating and being removed from the position. To ensure this occurs, the following procedures shall be followed:

a. A rater shall issue a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" prior to issuing a "below performance requirements" rating to a permanent employee. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements," in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the rater shall provide the employee with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee's review date. However, if the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee's review date, the review date would roll forward a day for each day the warning notice is in effect.

b. The rater and employee should participate in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In those instances where the rater and employee cannot agree upon the

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content of the work improvement plan, the rater's decision shall be final.

c. During the warning period, the employee and the rater shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they shall discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held. Copies of this documentation shall be placed in the employee's official personnel file and given to the employee upon request.

d. If the employee's performance is rated "meets performance requirements" or above, on all essential job functions/objectives, which significantly impact performance, noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated "below performance requirements," on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., dismissed, reassigned, demoted).

e. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must be rated prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default.

f. If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365 day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function/objective, which significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365 day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "below performance requirements" appraisal. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.

WARNING NOTICE OF SUBSTANDARD PERFORMANCE

The requirements of a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" are:

a. The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee will not sign).

b. The notice shall list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee's planning document that are considered "below performance requirements," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.

and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., dismissal, demotion, reassignment).

d. The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.

A copy of the notice shall be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file.

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Donna G. Graywick 5/13/91

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 13, 1996

Ms. Gloria Hallman
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Sincerely,

Donna G. Traywick

Donna G. Traywick
Assistant Director
Office of Human Resources

DGT: esm

Enclosure

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B

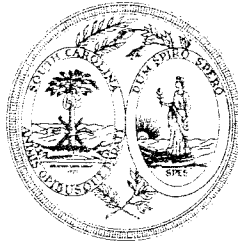
APPENDIX B CONTAINS A WRITTEN REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF A REVISED VERSION OF THE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY dated August 25, 2003

State of South Carolina
Office of the Secretary of State
The Honorable Mark Hammond

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Boards/Commissions
(803) 734-2119

Notaries
(803) 734-2512

August 12, 2003

Terry Baggott
Office of Human Resource Management
1201 Main St., Suite 1000
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Terry:

Enclosed please find an updated Employee Performance Management System Policy that will replace the existing one that was approved by your office on 5/13/96. The policy basically updates wording.

In the near future, we will be contacting your office for the proper training necessary for the staff.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

MARK HAMMOND
Secretary of State